

An Effective External Partnership

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In 1994, the Georgia Board of Regents established a set of Guiding Principles for system colleges and universities. One of these principles states that "The University System of Georgia shall create deep, rich partnerships with elementary and secondary schools." At the Clarkston Campus of Georgia Perimeter College such a partnership was already in existence. Eldridge L. Miller Elementary and the Clarkston Campus of Georgia Perimeter College have been "Partners In Education" for over twelve years. This formal arrangement was established under the DeKalb County School System's Partners In Education (PIE) program. In the system's PIE mission statement, partnerships are established to support the school's students and teachers. The Georgia Perimeter College and Miller Elementary partnership not only supports the elementary school but also offers an extended learning environment for Georgia Perimeter College students and faculty.

The PIE committee for Georgia Perimeter College, Clarkston Campus, consists of a representative from each of the academic departments, plus representatives from many other vital areas of the college such as the Advising and Counseling Center, Student Government Association, Interpreter Training, Center for Disabilities Services, and Family Services. The goal of each department or area is to sponsor an activity with Miller Elementary each academic year. For many years this activity involved only GPC faculty and/or staff. In more recent years GPC students have become increasingly more involved in the PIE opportunities at Miller.

Working through PIE, the faculty, staff, and students from the Clarkston Campus of GPC have sponsored the following activities at Miller Elementary:

- GPC Foundations in Education students assisted teachers and served as tutors in grades pre-k-6.
- GPC Humanities faculty conducted Creative Writing workshops for the 4th grade.
- GPC faculty and students conducted a Science Day at GPC for the entire 6th grade.
- GPC Social Science faculty and students provided Black Authors Poetry Readings in grades 1 -6.
- GPC Business faculty conducted a Career Day for the 6th grade.
- GPC Nursing faculty and students presented a Nutrition Awareness program to the 4th grade.
- GPC Interpreter Training staff and students taught sign language to students in several grade levels.
- GPC Mathematics, Computer Science, and Engineering faculty and students conducted a mathematics Ciphering Contest for the entire 5th grade.
- GPC Mathematics, Computer Science, and

Engineering faculty presented a Fractal Generation Computer Class to the top 6th grade mathematics students.

- GPC Center for Disability Services staff and students presented a Disability Awareness program.
- GPC Fine Arts department students performed a play at Miller Elementary.
- GPC students from the Student Government Association and Student Georgia Association of Educators sponsored a Holiday Tree Trimming party for Miller Elementary special education students.
- GPC Fine Arts faculty painted murals on the walls of the Miller Elementary library and faculty lounge.
- A graphic artist for GPC designed buttons to be used by the administrators of the elementary school to reward good grades.
- Free admission for Miller Elementary faculty to GPC Fine Arts productions was donated.
- PIE notepads for Miller Elementary faculty were provided.
- Children's book illustrator, Michael White, conducted programs for the 4th grade.
- Teacher of the Year and Student of the Year plaques were donated and have been updated yearly at Miller Elementary.
- GPC sponsored an Essay and Poster Contest for the 3rd and 5th grades in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Miller Elementary students and families were invited to attend the GPC Family Festival.
- Miller Elementary students and their families were invited to the Royal Hanniford Circus sponsored by the GPC Student Government Association.
- A monetary award for the top 6th grade student at Miller Elementary was donated.
- A monetary award and Awards Banquet tickets for the Miller Elementary Teacher of the Year were donated.
- An ice cream sundae party was provided to students of Miller Elementary who had the highest test scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.
- Stuffed animals patterned after the school mascot were donated to be used for student awards.
- A Partners in Education banner was hung in Miller Elementary's cafeteria.
- A donation of \$500 from publishers was obtained to place books in the Miller Elementary library in memory of a former principal who died of leukemia.
- A magnolia tree and marble marker were donated to Miller Elementary in memory of this former principal.

Although the Georgia Perimeter College Partner In Education program was initially designed to aid the partner elementary school, it has developed into a partnership that provides the students and faculty of GPC an opportunity to grow and learn as well.